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OBITUARY

Benjamin Altman.

Benjamin Altman, the widely-known founder and head of B. Altman & Co., and perhaps the most eminent art collector in America, and one of the greatest in the world, now that Mr. Morgan has passed, died at his Fifth Ave. residence in this city on Tuesday afternoon last, of heart failure, resulting from kidney disease, aged 73. His funeral took place from the Temple Emanuel, Friday afternoon.

Mr. Altman was born in this city July 12, 1840, a son of a dry goods merchant on the lower east side. He attended the public schools and proved an apt pupil. He early evinced a love for art, and before he was sixteen years old he was thoroughly conversant with the masterpieces of the old painters, whose works he admired and many of which he later acquired.

He left school at the age of 12 and after the death of his father in 1863, with his brothers concluded to continue his business under the name of Altman Brothers. They had a small store at Third Ave. and Tenth St.

Morris Altman died about a dozen years after the partnership when Benjamin was 39 years old. The business was not considered prosperous at the time, even for a small store, but Benjamin believed that it had a future of his making and started out on a larger scale.

The firm of B. Altman & Co. started business in a small place in Sixth Ave., between Twentieth and Twenty-first Sts., about thirty-five years ago. Five years later, long before the uptown movement began, the company moved to Sixth Ave. and Nineteenth St.

Its business grew rapidly and the firm found it necessary to make frequent additions to its building, land being acquired until the store became one of the most imposing ones of its day.

In 1905 the company erected its handsome department store on the east side of Fifth Ave. between Thirty-fourth and Thirty-fifth Sts., which now, with its addition on Madison Ave., soon to be completed, will cover the entire block, will cost \$1,800,000 and will make the total value of the Altman store and land some \$12,000,000.

Devoted to Business.

Mr. Altman was a bachelor, but did not belong to clubs and was most reserved. His first thought was his business, and it was his long years of devotion to it that broke down his health more than once.

He disliked publicity of any kind. His enormous fortune will probably go largely to two neices and two nephews, and who are his only surviving relatives. It is as yet too early to even speculate as to the disposition of his art collections, but it is more than probable they will go to the Metropolitan Museum.

An English Estimate.

A writer in The London "Times" in 1908, discussing the great collectors of the world, bracketed Benjamin Altman with Mr. Frick, Mr. Widener, and the late Rodolphe Kann, while, of course, the supremacy over all was given to the late J. Pierpont Morgan. Since then Mr. Altman had acquired many of the most important treasures of the wonderful collection that he amassed, but it is possible, says the N. Y. Times "that had the English writer even in 1908 realized what the house at Fifth Ave. and Fiftieth St. contained he would have put Mr. Altman as a collector in a class by himself.

The N. Y. Times says also "he was probably the most fastidious collector who ever lived. He was satisfied with nothing less than perfection. He was not catholic in his tastes, as was Mr. Morgan, but within the limits that he set for them, his collections, it is no exaggeration to say, are incomparable in America or Europe.

A Fastidious Secretive Collector.

"Mr. Altman would ruthlessly sacrifice some specimen, however great its value, if he could replace it by a finer one. This process he repeated over and over again, until the three or four rooms in which the greater number of his treasures are contained—the very finest of them are all in a single apartment of moderate size—are undoubtedly, for their extent, the richest Aladdin's Cave of pictures, porcelain, enamels, textiles, and rock crystal carvings in existence.

"The fourteen Rembrandts and other old masters—every one a masterpiece famous among connoisseurs—are hung rather high up, above cases which contain astonishing specimens of the textile art of the Orient. In other cases, some glazed, the majority closed, are some of the most glorious things that Leonard Limousin and his family ever executed—enamels that nothing in the Louvre or South Kensington surpasses. In yet other cases are jade and crystal carv-

ings; in others miscellaneous objects, each of which is a masterpiece of workmanship.

"Besides being one of the most fastidious of collectors, continues the N. Y. Times, Mr. Altman was also one of the most secretive. He disliked publicity in regard to his purchases. There is a typewritten catalog of his treasures, of which, presumably, copies were made, but a printed description of the collection is yet to be produced. Few persons obtained the privilege of examining his art objects, but these few in recent years included various celebrated European connoisseurs, who, one and all, expressed amazement at the richness of the collection.

"It can be said safely that when the estimate of the money value of the collection is made, as, of course, it will now have to be made, the result will be surprising. It is said that Mr. Altman paid \$1,000,000 for the two works by Velasquez—the celebrated portraits of King Philip IV and the Minister Olivares (the last since returned). It is known that he gave a similar sum for four pictures from the Kann collection, Rembrandt's portrait of "Oscar Haring", "Man with a Magnifying Glass" and "Woman with a Red Book," and Ruysdael's "Cornfields." These four works he loaned to the Metropolitan Museum for the Hudson-Fulton celebration. It was the first time anything from the Altman collection had ever been exhibited publicly.

Some Great Rembrandts.

Of the fourteen Rembrandts six at least are of the first rank. The "Old Woman Cutting Her Nails," "Pilate Washing His Hands," "Portrait of Rembrandt's Son Titus," "Portrait of Thomas Haring," "The Lady with the Pink" and "The Man with the Magnifying Glass," the last three from the Maurice Kann collection, are all remarkable examples.

The Holbein is the "Portrait of Lady Lee," known also as "Portrait of Margaret Wyatt," acquired from E. Gimpel & Wildenstein.

The two Frans Hals are "Yonker Rampen Zyne Liefste," and the "Jovial Company." A canvas which has excited much and deserved controversy.

The three examples of Memling are "The Marriage of St. Catherine," and two portraits of a man and a woman. There is a fine Albrecht Dürer, a "Madonna and Child with St. Ann," and a "Young Girl Asleep," is by Vermeer.

The Ruysdael is the "Wheatfields," a beautiful landscape from the Maurice Kann collection.

Mr. Altman had, of the early Italian school, Francia's "Portrait of Federigo Gonzaga," Giogione's "Portrait of Ariosto," and a Botticelli "Last Communion of St. Jerome," painted in 1490, and which was one of Mr. Altman's latest purchases acquired last spring.

He had as examples of Velasquez, "Portraits of King Philip IV of Spain," and the "Duke of Olivares," but the last was returned last year, their authenticity being questioned. Mr. Altman also owned the famous Mantegna Madonna, which brought a half million dollars at the Weber sale in Berlin in 1910, and which he secured from the Klienberger Galleries.

He owned several important tapestries, including two early Flemish examples, "The Adoration of the Three Holy Kings," from cartoons by Van Orley, from the Hainauer collection, and "Scenes from the Life of Mary," from cartoons by Roger Van der Weyden, from the Spitzer collection. There is also a fine collection of sixteenth century rugs.

Mr. Altman had one of the finest collections of Chinese porcelains in the world, containing many fine monochromes and black hawthorns. He also had an important collection of sixteenth century Italian and German rock crystals from the Spitzer collection, which was dispersed at Paris in 1893.

Tapestries, Rugs and Porcelains.

The antique rugs belonging to Mr. Altman are famous among authorities everywhere. There was no feature of his collections in which he took more delight and on which he was more willing to lavish money. These precious specimens of Oriental art, including some that are unique, are as carefully cased as everything else in the treasure rooms.

Among the miscellaneous art objects are a marble bust by Mino da Fiesole, a marble relief by Rossellino, and a painted terra cotta bust by Donatello—the last named from the Rodolphe Kann collection. There are also some fine statuettes by Clodion, Falconer and Houdon.

Dr. Bode declared that the Ming porcelains owned by Mr. Altman were superior even to the magnificent J. P. Morgan collection of this ware. In all the Altman Oriental porcelains there is not a piece that is not remarkable.

James Ross.

James Ross, financier, railroad builder and art collector, died in Montreal, Oct. 20, of heart disease, aged 65.

Mr. Ross was one of the group of railroad builders whose names were linked with the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railroad. He was born in Scotland, and came to America in 1868, when 20 years old. He was first employed by the Wisconsin Central Railroad, and later, on going to Canada, was appointed first Chief Engineer and afterward General Manager of the Victoria Railroad. In 1887 he built the Credit Valley Railway, and was later made its General Manager.

When 35 Mr. Ross was intrusted with the difficult task of building the Canadian Pacific west of Winnipeg through the Canadian wilderness. Two years later he had completed the line over the Rocky Mountains, Selkirk, and the Gold Range. He then received the contract for the remaining portion of the line and built it. During the last twenty years he was interested in traction, power, and mining operations.

He owned the Glencairn, winner of the Seawanhaka-Corinthian Challenge Cup for half-raters in American waters in 1896 and was an honorary member of the N. Y. Yacht Club.

The collection of pictures, formed by Mr. Ross, while not large, is of rarely fine general quality. It includes probably the two finest examples of Turner ever imported.

Robert Hewitt.

Robert Hewitt, the collector and owner of the most important collection of Lincolnia, which he recently loaned to the Metropolitan Museum, died Oct. 6 at Ardsley-on-Hudson, aged 72. When a young man he began the collection of everything of importance pertaining to Lincoln, which he made more valuable and complete than any similar collection. He was also a collector of art objects and medallions. He was a member of the N. Y. Numismatic Society, the Arts and the Ardsley Clubs.

Francis Bartlett.

Francis Bartlett, a collector of prominence and for many years a director of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, died Sept. 23, at his summer home at Pride's Crossing, Mass.

He was born at Boston, 1836, and was graduated from Harvard University. Ten years ago Mr. Bartlett gave the Boston Museum one of the finest collections of ancient art known in the country, valued at more than \$1,000,000. Among the rare specimens which it included were statues made more than five hundred years ago. Another specimen was a vase fashioned five centuries before Christ.

Walter Scott Thurber.

Walter Scott Thurber, who suddenly passed, while seated at his desk in his Chicago gallery, Sept. 24 last, was the oldest and one of the most widely known art dealers in the United States. Although partly crippled and dependent upon his cane or crutches to get about for nearly a score of years, Mr. Thurber built up a prosperous business, kept his ideas of art in advance of the times and faced the world always with cheerful courage.

In spite of his infirmities, he went abroad and visited art exhibitions frequently. Mr. Thurber was born in Black Lake, N. Y., in 1848, and after graduating from St. Lawrence College came to Chicago and became a clerk in the grocery of Stanton & Co. Next door was the art gallery of Martin O'Brien, and that pioneer art dealer, taking a fancy to the young man, offered him a place as salesman. For nearly a score of years he remained with the O'Briens, studying pictures and developing into a rarely good connoisseur.

In 1880 Mr. Thurber, believing that Chicago could support another picture gallery, opened one of his own two doors south of O'Brien's, then on Wabash Ave., near Adams St. Here his business prospered, and he was the first dealer to see where the art center would eventually be, and in 1909 he removed to Michigan Ave.

Sir Alfred East.

Sir Alfred East, President of the Royal Society of British Artists, died in London, Sept. 28.

He was born in Kettering, Eng., Dec., 1849, and received his education at the Government School of Art at Glasgow and afterward at the Ecole des Beaux Arts, Paris. He was a cavalier of the Order of the Crown of Italy, an associate of the Societe Nationale des Beaux Arts, Paris; honorary associate of the Royal Institute of British Architects, honorary member of the Meiji Biutsu Kai of Japan, of the Societe Royal d'Aquarellistes of Belgium and the royal academies of London, Paris, Munich and Barcelona.

Sir Alfred East's works are to be found in many galleries all over the world. His "Returning from Church," is in the Carnegie

Art Gallery at Pittsburgh, Pa.; "A Passing Storm," in the Luxembourg at Paris, "A Haunt of Ancient Peace" in the National Gallery of Hungary, "London at Night" in the Milan National Gallery, "The Morning Moon" in the Art Institute at Chicago, "The White Carnival" in the Brussels National Gallery and numerous works in various municipal galleries in England.

In 1906 Sir Alfred published a book on "The Art of Landscape Painting in Oil Color."

Sir Alfred visited this country for the last time in 1912, when he came here to attend the commencement at Yale University.

H. Dujardin-Beaumetz.

Henri C. E. Dujardin-Beaumetz, former French Under-Secretary of Fine Arts, died Sept. 27 after an operation.

He was born at Paris, Sept. 29, 1852, was an artist by profession, and was awarded a medal at the French Salon of 1880. Later he went to politics and was elected Deputy in 1889, from which year he continued to be a member of the Chamber until his death.

His enemies prophesied that the disappearance of "Mona Lisa" from the Louvre during his administration would result in his severing his connection with the Fine Arts Department. The prediction proved correct. After the loss of the masterpiece the French people turned against him and his great popularity vanished. His departure from the Fine Arts Department was a blow to struggling artists, as he had been always their staunch friend.

Edward Taylor Snow.

Edward Taylor Snow, art collector and painter, died on Friday, Sept. 27, in Philadelphia, aged 73. Since early manhood Mr. Snow had been engaged in making an art collection.

Mr. Snow began his career as a pupil at the Phila. Academy half a century ago. Later he went to Europe, where he studied art in France, Holland, and Germany. Aside from his talents as an artist, Mr. Snow was recognized as an exceptional judge of paintings and objects of art. He made the selection for George C. Thomas's private collection and for the Peter Schemm Gallery. For many years he acted as sales agent at the annual exhibition of the Academy of Fine Arts. In this capacity he sold nearly \$1,000,000 worth of new art works.

Mr. Snow was Art Commissioner at the Tennessee Centennial and at the Omaha Exposition, and a jurymen at the Charleston Exposition. He was a charter member of many art societies.

Peter B. West.

Peter B. West, a well-known painter of animals and landscapes, died Oct. 3 at his home in Albion, N. Y. He was born in Bedford, England, in 1837, and came to this country in 1863. Mr. West was a prize-winner at the Centennial and Chicago World's Fair.

MISS SPRINGER WINS OUT.

Justice Bijur, of the Supreme Court, has decided that Miss Charlotte Springer is entitled to the full amount of a commission of \$20,000, which she claims is owed her by Duveen Bros. for her services in effecting the sale of the famous so-called Don Quixote tapestries owned by the King of Spain to the late J. Pierpont Morgan. Miss Springer brought suit to recover this commission over a year ago, alleging that she had negotiated with King Alfonso for the sale of the tapestries, through the Duke of Anjou, as agent, that it was agreed by the Duke that she was to receive a commission of \$20,000 when the tapestries were sold, that she interested the late Mr. Morgan in the tapestries, that he referred her to Duveen Bros., and that she arranged with them to receive the full commission, above alluded to, when a sale was made, and that she gave Duveen Bros. full information as to details of sale, where the tapestries could be seen, etc. She further alleged that Duveen Bros. sent a representative to Spain to inspect the tapestries and concluded their sale for \$340,000, direct with Mr. Morgan, leaving her out of the transaction. Mr. Stanchfield, counsel for Duveen Bros., opposed a demurrer on the ground that Miss Springer, in her complaint, did not give sufficient facts, but this was overruled by Justice Bijur.